Status of Institute

700. SHRI DHARMABHIKSHAM: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) The present status of Sri Swamy Ramananda Thirtha Institute Project at Bhoodan Pochampally in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) the time by which the classes will be started at the Institute?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) and (b) According to the information furnished by the Andhra Pradesh Government, Swami Ramananda Tirtha Rural Institute has started functioning and is currently located in a rented building with a library, classrooms, office and other infrastructure to organise short-term courses. During 1997-98, the Institute has organised three one-day courses-cum-seminars on rural education. A six-weeks intensive training programme for 30 handloom weavers is scheduled to be held in December, 1997.

Damage of Bridges on NHs in West Bengal and Assam

701. SHRI AMAR ROY PRADHAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of bridges on National Highways damaged in West Bengal and Assam during each of the last three years;

(b) the number of bridges out of them repaired and the time by which the remaining bridges are likely to be repaired; and

(c) the total amount likely to be incurred on the repair of these bridges?

THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATARAMAN): (a) Yearwise number of bridges damaged is indicated below:

Year	West Bengal	Assam
1994-95	Nil	Nil
1995-96	Nil	Nil
1996-97	1	1

(b) Both the bridges have since been repaired.

(c) An amount Rs. 58.82 lakhs was incurred.

Parthenium Menace

702. JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Parthenium (Congress Grass) is menacingly spreading in India at a fast rate;

(b) if so, the places where it is abundantly found and its harmful effects on the environment and animals who eat this grass;

(c) whether Bangalore is having high concentration of Parthenium and is causing respiratory diseases; and

(d) if so, the remedial steps taken/proposed to be taken to control the growth of Parthenium?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ): (a) Yes. Sir,

(b) and (c) It was first observed in Pune during 1955. It has now virtually spread to almost all the States of India. It is a dominating weed of uncultivated land, road side, unbuilt areas of developing residential colonies, river banks, orchards, forests and crop fields. It is an annual weed which causes allergic symptoms like dermatitis, allergic rhinitia (Hay fever), asthma and bronchitis. The alkaloids like lectone and parthenin located in the leaves and stem are responsible for causing dermatitis. Pollens are claimed to create asthmatic and allergic complications.

(d) Several studies and programmes have been initiated to check its rapid spread and eradication. Attempts have been made to summarize the research findings of various preventive, manual, mechanical, chemical and biological control methods.

[Translation]

Development of Tourism Centres

703. SHRIMATI KAMAL RANI: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the funds allocated to Uttar Pradesh for the development of Tourism Centres during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) whether the Union Government have received request from State Govt. for providing more funds for promoting tourism centres and their development;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the action taken by the Govt. in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA): (a) The Department of Tourism, Govt. of India has sanctioned projects for development of tourism in Uttar Pradesh during the last three years as per details given below:

Year	(Rs.in lakhs)
1994-95	223.80
1995-96	31.10
1996-97	271.96

(b) to (d) The Department of Tourism in consultation with the State Govt., has prioritised 21 projects estimated at Rs. 412.50 lakhs for tourism development in Uttar Pradesh during 1997-98.